<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>

1. (Currently amended) A computer-based method of performing document retrieval in accordance with an information network, the method comprising the steps of:

initially retrieving one or more documents from the information network that satisfy a user-defined predicate, wherein the initial document retrieval operation is performed without assuming a specific model of a linkage structure such that the initial document retrieval operation retrieves the one or more documents without assuming that a relationship exists between a feature of a first one of the one or more documents and a feature of at least another one of the one or more documents that links to the first one;

collecting <u>at least a set of aggregate statistical information and a set of predicate-specific</u> statistical information about the one or more retrieved documents as the one or more retrieved documents are analyzed; and

using the collected statistical information to automatically determine further document retrieval operations to be performed in accordance with the information network, wherein the statistical information using step further comprises learning a linkage structure from at least a portion of the collected statistical information with each successive document retrieval operation such that the learned linkage structure is available for use in performing subsequent document retrieval operations requested by a user.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user-defined predicate specifies content associated with a document.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the statistical information collection step uses content of the one or more retrieved documents.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the statistical information collection step considers whether the user-defined predicate has been satisfied by the one or more retrieved documents.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are more likely to satisfy the predicate than would otherwise occur with respect to document retrieval operations that are not directed using the collected statistical information.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are similar to the one or more retrieved documents that also satisfy the predicate.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are linked to by other documents which also satisfy the predicate.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the information network is the world wide web and a document is a web page.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the statistical information collection step uses one or more uniform resource locator tokens in the one or more retrieved web pages.

10. (Currently amended) Apparatus for performing document retrieval in accordance with an information network, the apparatus comprising:

at least one processor operative to: (i) initially retrieve one or more documents from the information network that satisfy a user-defined predicate, wherein the initial document retrieval operation is performed without assuming a specific model of a link<u>age</u> structure such that the initial document retrieval operation retrieves the one or more documents without assuming that a relationship exists between a feature of a first one of the one or more documents and a feature of at least another one of the one or more documents that links to the first one; (ii) collect <u>at least a set of</u>

aggregate statistical information and a set of predicate-specific statistical information about the one or more retrieved documents as the one or more retrieved documents are analyzed; and (iii) use the collected statistical information to automatically determine further document retrieval operations to be performed in accordance with the information network, wherein the statistical information using operation further comprises learning a linkage structure from at least a portion of the collected statistical information with each successive document retrieval operation such that the learned linkage structure is available for use in performing subsequent document retrieval operations requested by a user.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the user-defined predicate specifies content associated with a document.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the statistical information collection operation uses content of the one or more retrieved documents.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the statistical information collection operation considers whether the user-defined predicate has been satisfied by the one or more retrieved documents.

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are more likely to satisfy the predicate than would otherwise occur with respect to document retrieval operations that are not directed using the collected statistical information.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are similar to the one or more retrieved documents that also satisfy the predicate.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are linked to by other documents which also satisfy the predicate.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the information network is the world wide web and a document is a web page.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the statistical information collection operation uses one or more uniform resource locator tokens in the one or more retrieved web pages.

19. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture for performing document retrieval in accordance with an information network, comprising a machine readable medium containing one or more programs which when executed implement the steps of:

initially retrieving one or more documents from the information network that satisfy a user-defined predicate, wherein the initial document retrieval operation is performed without assuming a specific model of a linkage structure such that the initial document retrieval operation retrieves the one or more documents without assuming that a relationship exists between a feature of a first one of the one or more documents and a feature of at least another one of the one or more documents that links to the first one;

collecting at least a set of aggregate statistical information and a set of predicate-specific statistical information about the one or more retrieved documents as the one or more retrieved documents are analyzed; and

using the collected statistical information to automatically determine further document retrieval operations to be performed in accordance with the information network, wherein the statistical information using step further comprises learning a linkage structure from at least a portion of the collected statistical information with each successive document retrieval operation such that the learned linkage structure is available for use in performing subsequent document retrieval operations requested by a user.

20. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein the user-defined predicate specifies content associated with a document.

21. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein the statistical information collection step uses content of the one or more retrieved documents.

22. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein the statistical information collection step considers whether the user-defined predicate has been satisfied by the one or more retrieved documents.

23. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 19, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are more likely to satisfy the predicate than would otherwise occur with respect to document retrieval operations that are not directed using the collected statistical information.

24. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are similar to the one or more retrieved documents that also satisfy the predicate.

25. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein the collected statistical information is used to direct further document retrieval operations toward documents which are linked to by other documents which also satisfy the predicate.

26. (Original) The article of claim 19, wherein the information network is the world wide web and a document is a web page.

27. (Original) The article of claim 26, wherein the statistical information collection step uses one or more uniform resource locator tokens in the one or more retrieved web pages.